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COPY NO. 699
OCI NO. 0268/61

23 February 1961

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY



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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY SUMMARY

CUBA

High Cuban officials have on several recent occasions publicly expressed willingness to resume "normal" relations with the United States, although these statements clearly imply prior acceptance by the United States of Cuba's ties with the bloc. The controlled press and radio contrast Cuba's "conciliatory gestures" with what they interpret as increasing signs of US intransigence.

The Castro regime is courting the newly inaugurated Quadros administration in Brazil, but there are indications that Quadros thus far prefers a neutral position and that the Brazilian military would strongly oppose close ties with Cuba. Cuban media have lauded Quadros for his "independence" of the US, and Fidel Castro on 16 February spent several hours with the departing Brazilian

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ambassador, Vasco Leitao da Cunha--the first time in over a year he is known to have talked alone with a Western diplomat. The ambassador, who left later the same day to assume the second most influential post in Brazil's Foreign Ministry, told the Brazilian press on his return home that "Fidel Castro" emphasized to me that Cuba cannot withdraw from the American community" and that Castro expects President Quadros to visit Cuba shortly.

Leitao da Cunha was one of the more knowledgeable diplomats during his nearly three years in Havana, and it is doubtful that he succumbed to Castro's blandishments; his private report to high Brazilian officials will probably be pessimistic concerning Cuban developments. Quadros, who visited Cuba last year as a presidential candidate, is not known to have expressed an intention to return.

Ecuador's attempts to promote an inter-American effort to "conciliate US-Cuban differences" appear to have met with little favorable response. Cuba is encouraging the Ecuadorean move as it would encourage any

Latin American move that could be used to demonstrate "US intransigence." Castro's recent threat to support antigovernment groups in other Latin American countries--in retaliation for US aid to Cuban refugees--has led to bitter anti-Castro reactions elsewhere in the hemisphere and serves to undercut Cuban efforts to appear desirous of maintaining normal relations with other hemisphere countries.

Cuba's recognition of the Gizenga regime in the Congo on 16 February was accompanied by propaganda blasts at the United States, as well as at the UN and Belgium, equaled in virulence only by Communist China's.

Inside Cuba, government forces continue to try to liquidate anti-Castro guerrilla forces in the Escambray Mountains of Las Villas Province, but there is still no indication that the operations are nearing success. It has been over six months since the government initiated this effort and nearly two months since it announced the launching of a "major offensive." ~~(SECRET)~~

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COUNTRY	Cuba	REPORT NO.	CS -3167,056
SUBJECT	Travel Restrictions in Las Villas Province	DATE DISTR.	23 March 1961
		NO. PAGES	1
		REFERENCES	RD
DATE OF INFO.	28 February 1961		
PLACE & DATE ACQ.	(1 March 1961)		

SOURCE EVALUATIONS ARE DEFINITIVE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE

SOURCE:

1. The CASTRO government has imposed stringent restrictions on persons travelling on the highway from Sancti Spiritus to Trinidad, Las Villas Province. Persons desiring to travel over this highway, which is along the western periphery of the Escambray Mountains, the region of extensive counterrevolutionary resistance, are required to obtain passes from the offices of the Las Villas Military District. Furthermore, check points have been set up along the highway to see that all travelers on the highway are in possession of the military passes.
2. Persons desiring to go to Trinidad from central and eastern parts of the Province can travel over the railroad line from Santa Clara without any special documentation. However, the government has taken some security precautions by stationing a large number of militiamen at various points along the railroad line.

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COUNTRY	Cuba	REPORT NO	OO-X 3,182,230
SUBJECT	Counterrevolutionary Forces Losing Hope/Shortage of US Dollars/Need for Rigid Embargo on Cuban Tobacco	DATE DISTR	27 March 1961
		NO PAGES	2
		REFERENCES	

DATE OF
INFO.

Late February 1961

PLACE &
DATE ACQ.

Late February 1961

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SOURCE:

1. The situation is becoming increasingly acute for anti-Castro counter-revolutionary forces in Cuba. I have many old friends in Havana and other large Cuban cities who are risking their lives daily, and are contributing every peso they can spare to counterrevolutionary activities. It is these men who are terrorizing the militia, and engaging in the bombing incidents which occur daily in Havana. They are in every sense as active as the counterrevolutionary forces in the Escambray, and actually are running greater personal risks. All, however, look to the Escambray as their symbol and hope for freedom, and the consensus is that if Castro is successful in wiping out opposition in the Escambray, Cuba is lost. Counterrevolutionary activities in the cities will cease. As many of my friends have said to me - "we are tired of risking our lives and living in the hope day after day that the counterrevolutionary invasion will come. If something does not happen in the near future, we shall give up and do our best to get ourselves and our families out of Cuba." Arrests are frequent, and oftentimes the accused are shot without benefit of trial, or a chance to refute the charges against them. Quite recently two teenage boys were shot on the word of a teenage girl - a member of Castro's militia - that they were responsible for a bombing incident in an Havana school. The only injury inflicted by the bombing incident was a slight head wound suffered by a little girl. Further, the stories of blood-letting prior to execution are absolute fact. A young doctor friend of mine accused of counterrevolutionary activity had so much blood drawn from his body before execution by a firing squad that it was necessary to lash him in an upright position in order to shoot him.
2. There is one sure and effective means to bring about the downfall of the Castro regime - total embargo. And I refer specifically to the tobacco sales to the US, which are providing Castro with the US dollars to pay for the anti-US propaganda which he is financing throughout Latin America. Every day ferryboats from Havana to West Palm Beach bring in tobacco and fruits. The tobacco is the predominant source of dollars for Castro, (approximately US\$10 million per year). Take any

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this source of dollars and Castro will fall within months. And the dollar shortage presently is acute. I can illustrate how desperate the regime is for dollars. Cuban law requires that all dollars be exchanged at the National Bank for pesos. Anyone found hoarding dollars is imprisoned. On the other hand, Cuban law now requires that travel tickets be paid for only with dollars. Travel agencies are told, however, not to ask people where they get their dollars, simply to accept them. I paid for my ticket on Pan American to the US in US dollars, money I borrowed from a friend in Florida.

3. The bigger Northern US tobacco companies see the need for the embargo on Cuban tobacco if Castro is to be overthrown - it is recognized that Northern companies only purchase between 10-15 percent of their tobacco from Cuba - but the tobacco interests in Tampa, Florida, who purchase 100 percent of their supply from Cuba, are opposed to the embargo saying it will ruin them. This is not true. I have supplied those companies for years, and I know that they all carry sufficient stocks to keep them in production for a year. The lawyer for these tobacco interests also states that if Castro does not sell to the US, he will sell to world markets. This, too, is nonsense. The US is the only country still paying US\$1 to US\$2 per pound. Europe - with the exception of Holland and Switzerland who take only one percent of Cuba's ground leaf crop - pay only US 25 cents to US 50 cents per pound for fillers. Nearly 100 percent of the top grade tobacco grown in Cuba is sold to the US; the small percentage which is not sold to the US remains in Cuba. Enforce a rigid embargo on Cuban tobacco and Castro, with his dollar supply cut off, will be finished.

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2 March 1961

SC No. 00051/61
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SUPPLEMENT TO THE CURRENT INTELLIGENCE DIGEST

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LATIN AMERICA

4. Organized Resistance Continuing
In Cuba

Anti-Castro forces are continuing their activities throughout Cuba despite government claims that major centers of resistance have been, or are about to be, eliminated. Government sources claim the capture of about 900 rebels in the Escambray Mountains of Las Villas Province --an area in which the government had previously estimated that less than 1,000 guerrillas were concentrated. !

Castro publicly admitted early this year that Las Villas is the province most widely affected by dissidence; only widespread public support for the anti-Castro cause could have sustained the guerrilla activity this long in the face of concerted government counteraction.

A recent escapee from Cuba reported on 27 February that an opposition group has detailed plans for the sabotage of Cuban oil refineries in the Havana area.

The skirmishes between guerrilla bands and government forces in Oriente, Matanzas, and Camaguey provinces, prob-

ably involve small and scattered resistance groups, some of which have already apparently been eliminated. However, the fact that at least some of these outbreaks involve personnel who defected from the armed forces or other government entities is indicative of a situation that could in the long run become a threat to the regime. The outbreaks may also reflect a growing determination among heretofore passive dissidents to resort to armed resistance and could have been part of a coordinated effort to relieve some of the pressure on the Escambray guerrillas.

Cuban exile groups are approaching an agreement to coordinate their activity against Castro. Rivalries among the exiles have long hampered their activity.

Sources:

CIA/FBIS HAVANA,
28 Feb 61 (OUO).

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Supplement

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